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SUBJECT: CJCS MULLEN'S MEETING WITH COAS GENERAL KAYANI

Classified By: Anne W. Patterson, for reasons 1.4 (b)(d)

¶1. (C) Summary: CJCS Mullen met with Pakistan's Chief of the Army Staff General Ashfaq Kayani twice March 3-4. At a private dinner on March 3, they engaged in a discussion of Pakistan's new political landscape in the aftermath of the February 18 parliamentary elections. During talks on March 4, Admiral Mullen briefed Kayani on the impact of U.S. domestic politics on our defense ties and engaged in a broad exchange on several important bilateral security issues. Admiral Mullen's visit, the second in less than a month, was intended to demonstrate the U.S. government's conviction to deepen our engagement with senior Pakistani officials. End Summary

¶2. (C) Admiral Mullen, Lieutenant General Carter Ham, J3 Joint Staff and Major General James R. Helmly visited General Kayani's house for a private dinner on March 3. Kayani began by providing a thorough explanation of the political situation including an analysis of the ongoing negotiations over the makeup of the incoming government and a description of the major political players. The General acknowledged the stated desire of some newly ascendant politicians to impeach President Musharraf but said he did not think these efforts would succeed. Discussing the military budget Kayani acknowledged it had been controlled and "protected" by President Musharraf in the past but that it would now be exposed to the parliament and he was ready to "appear in public to defend it." After discussing national politics Kayani transitioned into a discussion of the unique culture and history of Pakistan's FATA. He explained how the legacy of the Frontier Crimes Regulation and the corresponding role of the Pashtun Tribal Code impacted the FATA's system of governance.

¶3. (C) On March 4, Admiral Mullen and General Kayani met again focusing their discussions on bilateral military ties. They were joined by Lieutenant General Carter Ham and Major General James R. Helmly for the U.S. side and Lieutenant General Satthar, Chief of the General Staff; Major General Ahmad Shuja Pasha, Director General Military Operations (DGMO); Major General Nadeem Ijaz, Director General Military Intelligence; and Brigadier Zubair, Personal Secretary to the Chief of the Army Staff.

¶4. (C) Admiral Mullen began by telling Kayani that a U.S. SIGINT team had completed its initial assessment of Pakistan's requirements and that they intended to propose options to assist them in developing a solution. Admiral Mullen then asked Kayani for his help in approving a third Restricted Operating Zone for U.S. aircraft over the FATA.

Regarding the FATA, Kayani spoke of a "long range campaign plan" to deal with Baitullah Mehsud although he provided no particulars. Kayani gave the impression that his strategy would focus on a defensive campaign for the foreseeable future. This campaign would include the initiation of discrete offensive operations in response to militant provocations so as to protect his forces and blunt tactical threats.

15. (C) He explained that his intent was not to "hand the incoming government a problem" but rather "a stable situation." Kayani indicated he understood the frailty of the new government and the need to prevent near-term challenges to it. The U.S. interlocutors impressed upon Kayani to advise the incoming government of the need to take responsibility for combating militancy rather than continuing to engage in rhetoric. Kayani said he needed the U.S. Ambassador to encourage those who might become Prime Minister to "establish the position and take responsibility."

16. (C) Kayani said statements in the Western press regarding the deployment of U.S. trainers to Pakistan cast the Army in a poor light. He acknowledged the need for American assistance but cautioned that it could not be publicized because it implied that the Pakistani Army was not capable of facing down the militant threat. He emphasized that he needed Admiral Mullen's help to "manage perceptions" and that he would like the U.S. to provide train the trainer types of assistance so that these responsibilities would ultimately shift to the Pakistan Army.

17. (C) Admiral Mullen raised the issue of Coalition Support Funds (CSF). Admiral Mullen told Kayani that the

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U.S. goal was to move forward and that his help was needed in finding the best way ahead on this program. Kayani replied that the "UN model" for reimbursements served as a useful baseline for reforming CSF. As to the performance of the program Kayani explained that the money went to the GOP but that the Army only received a "small percentage." This was likely due to the fact that there are no formal mechanisms for ensuring that the reimbursements reach the Army.

18. (C) As to allegations that claims are inflated, Kayani said the U.S. should recognize that not all of the Army's costs are claimed and that it would be easier to account for if we could come to agreement on the types of costs that would be reimbursed. He also indicated that he was aware that there are some in the U.S. Congress that preferred an in kind reimbursement as opposed to a cash transfer. Kayani reminded Admiral Mullen that the "delay" in processing reimbursement claims is a problem that requires resolution.

19. (C) Kayani said that the U.S. effort to build the counterinsurgency skills of the FC through the implementation Security Development Plan "makes sense" and that improving its capabilities would help counter the spread of militant activity in the FATA. Kayani went on to explain that the Frontier Corps had certain discreet qualities that gave it "balance" but that it also had certain limitations. Specifically, Kayani said the FC was incapable of "holding ground" or conducting offensive operations. He cautioned that the US should not expect them to do more than they were capable of as it is simply "not in their culture."

PATTERSON